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dividual affair, and looked on with great disfavor by the tribe. Matters went on very well for a few months under the new regime. But Birche, a man of little capacity, at the same time a coward and a tyrant, could not be content with his position. He began a system of ill treatment against which the people grumbled, but which they feared to resent. At first both Lyon and myself tried to quiet the complaints, believing that punishment had been justly inflicted, and knowing that

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> "No man e'er felt the halter draw
> With just opinion of the law,
> Or held with judgment orthodox
> His love of justice in the stocks."

But it soon became apparent that his majesty (they are always called king) was abusing his power. The Indians dared not quarrel with Birche, for fear of offending the government, but came to Lyon almost daily with complaints. At last we decided to effect a change. Birche went to Limon to draw his salary, and at the same time to complain of a purely personal quarrel with Willie, in which he had fared worst. I arrived there a few days later, having completed my exploration, and being on my way to the Capital. On being asked for information and advice by the Commandante, I told the story and urged his removal. This could only be done by the minister, but he was suspended until the decision of that officer could be obtained. In a few days I saw Mr. Herrera, and after a conversation he decided to endorse the Commandante's action. Birche was accordingly removed, Willie was given a nominal chieftainship, and Lyon instructed to assume all responsibilities. Thus in less than two years the people have, without knowing how it happened, been deprived of their hereditary chiefs, and a foreigner placed over them. Willie remains with the empty title of chief without even the power to issue an order or punish an offender, except when ordered by Lyon. This gentleman has their entire confidence and respect, and many of the Indians begged to have even the title taken away permanently from the "royal" family. I have been thus prolix on this branch of the subject, because I was an eye witness, a participator, in the latter part of the events I relate. Trivial as they are, they may interest some, throwing light on the manner in which one tribe after another is subdued. [123]

A strange fatality seems to hang over these Isthmian Indians. Even when not brought into contact with the debasing influences of civilization, the tribes are visibly diminishing. Less than two centuries ago, the population of Talamanca, as Costa Rica calls her southeastern province, was counted by thousands, now barely 1200 souls can be found. The Shelaba tribe is extinct; the Changinas are at the point of extermination, the Tiribis number but one hundred and three souls, and Lyon tells me that the Cabecars of the Coen have diminished fully one-half within the last seventeen years, while the decrease in the Bri-bris is hardly less rapid. 161

During my travels in Talamanca I collected in each district an accurate 124 161

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161 enumeration of the population. My process was to get together several
●124 of the most intelligent and well-informed men in the district; cause them
to compare notes and then to tie a series of knots in strings as they are
[211] accustomed to do; different kinds of knots distinguishing the sexes. Each house was counted separately, so that I obtained an exact census of the whole country with the following results. This cord census is now in the museum of the Smithsonian Institution, with many other articles, illustrating the life and customs of the people.

[162] The population of each district is as follows:

Tiribi	103
Uren	604
Bri-bri	172
Cabecar	128
The Valley	219
Total	1226

This covers all of the water-sheds of the Tilorio and Tiliri rivers except two small bands; the Changinas on the Changina branch of the Tilorio and a refugee remnant of the Cabecars on the extreme head of the Tiliri. Probably an additional hundred would cover all of these.

On the North or Estrella river, and on the Chiripo, there are a few more Cabecars who have little communication with the headquarters of the tribe, but who are in the habit of going out to Limon or Matina for what little trade they require. These are probably in all, not more than 200 or 300 in number. Nearly all speak Spanish and they are gradually approximating to civilized or semi-civilized ways.

[461] The cause of the rapid decrease in the population is their extreme in-
146 dolence. With a country fitted to produce all the fruits of the tropics;
262 where maize grows luxuriantly, and where cattle and pigs increase without care or labor; they are content to make plantains their staple, and almost their only food. Chicha the form in which most of their maize
[273] is used, is a beverage very slightly intoxicating, if drank in large quantities, but the amount of nutriment derived from it is unimportant. Meat, whether of domestic or wild animals, is a rarity and a luxury, and the banana or plantain make up all deficiencies. The natural consequence of a bulky and comparatively innutritious diet is a low physical state.
147 The system has little resisting power against disease, or healing power
164 over wounds. A slight attack of coast fever, which, with an ordinary strong man of our own race, would be comparatively harmless, is very apt to terminate fatally with these people. Indolent ulcers are so common that perhaps a full fourth of not only adults, but even children have them, usually on the legs, originating in some slight scratch or bruise; and very few of the elderly persons are without their scars. These ulcers often last for years, and I have seen them as broad as the two hands opened side by side. Although the local diseases are few, the
165 entire absence of medical treatment, the ignorance of the first principles

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Chapter II.

The languages of southern Costa Rica.

Section I.—The Bri-bri language.

In the following notes, I have endeavored to embody such ideas and conclusions as I have arrived at while studying the language and compiling the vocabulary. From the difficulty of obtaining information from ignorant people, and from my own, by no means perfect knowledge of the language, possibly errors may have crept in, but while I do not think any important ones will be found, I do not venture to claim infallible accuracy. For a year I labored to find some rule for conjugation, and was obliged, as it were, to educate my informers up to the point of being able to give me information about a subject they had never thought of, and could see no use for. Not content to accept their statements categorically, I watched carefully the use of the verbs in their inflexions, and by dint of cross-questioning a number of people, and rejecting everything that was contradictory, I think the few verbs I have selected are correctly given. I have had the advantage not only of a year and a half in the country, in daily contact with a fellow-countryman who spoke the language fluently, enabling me thereby to learn it; but for two months, in the meantime, while absent, I had several intelligent Indians with me who understood Spanish, and finally, after returning to civilization, I had with me for eight months a native, with whom I talked habitually in his own language, and from whom I obtained many corrections of the errors that a stranger must necessarily make. This boy became an apt teacher and voluntarily set me right whenever he heard me use an incorrect expression. 124

Counting the few abstract words which have doubtless escaped me, and all the specific names of animals and plants, and many of the latter are made up of an adjective, or the name of some plant, combined with *wak* (tribe), I do not think the language can contain two thousand words, and perhaps not fifteen hundred. In preparing the vocabulary I have rejected most of these specific names, because there is no corresponding English word, and a complete natural history collection, carefully studied by competent students, would be required, so as to obtain an equivalent. Even then it would have been useless, because the names vary locally as much as similar words do in English. 192 128

In compound words, I have in most cases pointed out the roots, and separated the component parts by a | sign. Although so much detail may have been unnecessary, the study was interesting to myself, and some of the curious results may also interest others.

There can be no doubt but that this and its allied dialects, like all unwritten languages, are undergoing great changes. The language spoken in Terraba was formerly, and probably not long ago, the same as that of Tiribi. There are marked differences between the Cabecar of Coen and that of the Estrella or North River, and even local differences in the use of *r*, *l*, and *d*, can be observed between the half of the Bri-bri 197

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773 Very little remains in the field of legends or myths. Certain ones, told as recently as the time of Pittier, for example, "El Encanto,"[40] are now forgotten. The tales which are still told appear for the most part to be unfinished, half-remembered stories, and are, to a great extent, crude and unsatisfactory. The writer found that the telling of legends was similar, in a measure, to the gathering of language data. Few people remembered details, and no two people agreed on all details. The fundamental note in the tales collected is the importance placed on witchcraft, in spite of the fact that the *Borucas* like to give the impression that they no longer believe nor remember anything about witchery. The following are four myths which are still told by the *Boruca* Indians.

539 **The "Mamram."** These are two bewitched women. They were orphaned girls who were from Boruca, and who used to fish the crabs and the crayfish in the creek which runs through the town. Each day, as they exhausted one spot, they moved a bit further along the water course, until one day they disappeared completely and did not return.

The shamans, however, found the girls and tied them up, then moved them to Barranco. You know they are there today, because you can see the stones of their hearth. Their bodies are covered with hair, and they are ugly, not only in appearance, but also in character. They are very mean, and have bothered people so much in the vicinity, that more than one community has had to move. The last place they destroyed was Camakrán by Paso Caracol.

The Grandfather of the Volcano. A long time ago, the grandfather of the volcano fell in love with a girl and took care of her. She became pregnant. He brought her partridges, wild turkeys, *paweeles*, wild hogs, wild pigs, and deer. The girl had a son, and she took care of him and raised him until he was six. Then the father came with a great wind and took the boy from his mother, and carried him to his house.

The father continued to visit the mother nightly, however, bringing her dried meat.

[40] Pittier, 1941, pp. 93–94.